

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS COMMENTARY ON GROMYKO/ALLON MEETING

BEGIN SUMMARY: GROMYKO/ALLON MEETING HAS EVOKED
INTENSE INTEREST IN ISRAEL. ISRAELI COMMENTATORS,
WHILE NOT KNOWING WHAT ACTUALLY TRANSPIRED,
SPECULATE THAT THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS DISCUSSED
SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL FOR A MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE,
AND SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATING PROSPECTS. COMMENTA-
TORS BELIEVE THAT SOVIETS ARE UNLIKELY TO MAKE EARLY
MOVE FOR RENEWAL OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL.
END SUMMARY.

1. INFORMAL MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE. PRESS COMMENT GENERALLY
SUGGESTS THAT GROMYKO/ALLON MEETING REPRESENTED
POSITIVE STEP TOWARD CONVENING OF MULTILATERAL
MEETING. BLITZER (JERUSALEM POST), CITING "INFORMED
SOURCES," WRITES THAT GROMYKO TOLD ALLON THAT SOVIETS
ARE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH MEETING WITHOUT
PLO. AMERICAN, SOVIET AND ISRAELI OFFICIALS ARE
CONSIDERING CONVENING OF SUCH A MEETING, PERHAPS AT
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END OF NOVEMBER, EITHER IN GENEVA OR IN VIENNA. DAVAR'S

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT ALSO NOTES THAT GROMYKO INDICATED THAT SOVIETS REGARD SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL AS A GOOD ONE. MARGALIT (HAARETZ) OBSERVES THAT MULTILATERAL PROPOSAL MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN SOVIET IDEA PUT FORWARD BY THE AMERICANS. HAARETZ'S MATTY GOLAN, IN DISSENTING NOTE, BELIEVES THAT NEITHER ISRAELIS NOR SOVIETS ARE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN INFORMAL MULTILATERAL MEETING, ALTHOUGH FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. ISRAEL HAS NEVER BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION AND SOVIETS MAY BE DISINCLINED TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETING IN WHICH "WESTERN FRONT" MIGHT REDUCE THEIR INFLUENCE. GOLAN BELIEVES THAT SOVIETS MAY EVEN PROVE READY TO PROMOTE ISRAELI IDEA OF DIRECT SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS.

2. PROSPECTS FOR SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. PRESS NOTES THAT BOTH ALLON/GROMYKO MEETING AND SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL ARE ELEMENTS IN CURRENT EXPLORATIONS REGARDING POSSIBLE SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. JERUSALEM POST COMMENTS EDITORIALY THAT SOVIETS CLEARLY DO NOT INTEND TO PASSIVELY ALLOW SECRETARY TO DEAL WITH SYRIANS, LEADING TO THEIR POSSIBLE ESTRANGEMENT FROM SOVIET CAMP. AT SAME TIME, POST OBSERVED INFORMAL CONFERENCE IDEA WOULD ENABLE SOVIETS TO CIRCUMVENT THEIR COMMITMENT TO PLO, SINCE THEY WOULD BE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO PROMOTE PLO PARTICIPATION AT SUCH A CONFERENCE. DAVAR'S ESHED WRITES THAT JERUSALEM CIRCLES BELIEVE THAT THERE MAYBE POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN ATTAINMENT OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI INTERIM AGREEMENT AND RENEWAL OF SOVIET/ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS--EITHER IMMEDIATELY BEFORE OR IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUCH A DEVELOPMENT.

3. MAARIV (HARIF) SAYS THAT RABIN DOES NOT SHARE "ILLUSION" WHICH ALLON MAY HAVE AS TO POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF SOVIETS FOR SYRIAN/ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. RUSSIAN GESTURE IN TALKING TO ISRAELIS IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST SOVIETS IN INVOLVING THEMSELVES DIRECTLY IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS BY HOLDING OUT PROSPECT FOR NORMALIZATION OF SOVIET/ UNCLASSIFIED

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ISRAEL RELATIONS. "THE WHOLE BUSINESS WILL DO ISRAEL NO GOOD JUST NOW."

4. SOVIET/ISRAELI RELATIONS. ISRAELI PRESS IS UNANIMOUS IN ASSESSMENT THAT ALLON/GROMYKO MEETING DOES NOT FORESHADOW EARLY RENEWAL OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HAARETZ COMMENTS EDITORIALY THAT MEETING DOES NOT MEAN THAT

ISRAEL NOW HAS POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO ITS
RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. DAVAR ALSO ADVISES AGAINST
EXCESSIVE EXPECTATIONS, ADDING THAT ANY MOVE FOR
RENEWAL OF SOVIET/ISRAELI RELATIONS MUST COME FROM
SOVIET SIDE. IN MOSCOW'S STRUGGLE WITH AMERICANS AND
WITH SADAT, EDITORIAL CONTINUES, SOVIETS PROBABLY WILL
PREFER TO CONTINUE THEIR SUPPORT FOR EXTREMIST
ARAB ELEMENTS.
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